

HONORING THE MEMORY OF
HARRIETTE GLASNER

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 9, 2002

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the memory of Mrs. Harriette Glasner.

For those of us who have dedicated our lives to progressive causes, we have suffered a great loss with the passing of South Florida legend Harriette Glasner. Mrs. Glasner founded ten major social, cultural and human rights organizations. Among those she founded or co-founded are the Palm Beach County chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as the Urban League. For fifty years, Mrs. Glasner dedicated her life to the betterment of our society.

Harriette Glasner worked tirelessly for the desegregation of schools and colleges, lending financial assistance as well as her time and energy to the legal fight. She was also an early campaigner for the expansion of women's rights. Along the way, she founded the area's first Planned Parenthood office. Well-known among people active in the civil rights movement, Harriette truly never gave up and never gave in. Generations of South Floridians owe her a debt of gratitude. Her determination to fight for the rights of the poor and underprivileged and minorities have made our state and nation better places to live.

I knew Harriette Glasner through our work with the ACLU and the battles for integration. I will always remember her kind heart, keen intelligence and her selfless devotion to the many causes that have made our nation the great place it is today.

Mr. Speaker, while Harriette's passing will leave a huge hole in the front line of many progressive battles, I know the gap will be quickly filled by people who loved and respected her and are determined to continue the fights she started. That is the best tribute that can be offered for this life very well lived.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN REPOSITORY
SITE APPROVAL ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 2002

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam Speaker, today the House will vote on H. Res. 87, which will allow the Department of Energy to move forward in the process of licensing Yucca Mountain as a repository for nuclear waste. Although I realize we must find an answer for storing all of the Nation's nuclear waste, including that in Wisconsin, I oppose this resolution for several reasons.

Over the last two decades, there have been thousands of shipments of nuclear waste on the highways and railways that crisscross America. If Yucca Mountain is granted a license to receive nuclear waste, the number of shipments could increase exponentially. This is particularly troubling because the proposed routes will pass through 44 states and over 700 counties—passing near our schools,

churches, and homes, including possibly in my district. While there have been few accidents when moving waste through the U.S. to date, increasing shipments by the thousands will only increase the probability of a devastating catastrophe. The events on September 11 have shown that anything is possible, and that common mishaps are not the only aspects we should take into account when examining safety and security concerns.

Throughout the debate over Yucca Mountain, numerous questions have been raised about the lack of sound science that went in to deeming the site safe. Very early in the testing process, the DOE retroactively changed the rules for site eligibility after it became apparent that the original rules could not be met for Yucca Mountain. Ever since, the credibility of the scientific standards and evidence has gotten progressively worse. Three federal agencies have released reports about Yucca Mountain—all three reports have expressed doubts and grave concerns about the suitability of the site.

The General Accounting Office (GAO), which is the investigative office of the federal government, indicated there are more than 293 unresolved technical issues with Yucca Mountain, including how quickly the containers will leak radioactive waste, the amount and speed of water flowing through the waste area, and the likelihood of volcanic activity. The GAO has yet to get answers to the majority of these questions. I believe we have no choice but to make certain we base this decision on sound science. Nuclear waste is the most dangerous substance we have ever created and will be deadly for thousands of years. Future generations depend on us being absolutely sure Yucca Mountain is safe, and science has not concluded that as yet.

Despite the scientific uncertainties of storing and shipping nuclear waste, there has been a sense of urgency to move forward with a decision on Yucca Mountain. Unfortunately, I believe this urgency has been fueled by politics—not by policy concerns regarding nuclear waste. The Nuclear Policy Act amendments of 1987 eliminated alternative sites, and billions of dollars have been devoted to Yucca Mountain. I believe some legislators may feel there is no turning back because of the tremendous federal resources that have already been invested in the project. Money concerns should not come before any policy that could threaten public safety.

Furthermore, DOE Secretary, Spencer Abraham, has also said that a permanent site for nuclear waste will promote energy security by removing a roadblock to expanding nuclear power. This also leads me to believe that the sense of urgency is not driven by an understanding of the properties of the Yucca Mountain site, but rather larger-scale issues regarding America's overall energy policies. Approving Yucca Mountain could lead to an unfettered expansion of nuclear power at a time when I believe we can be promoting other energy sources—like renewable and alternative energy technologies—that do not have harmful bi-products and the potential for devastating long-term effects on the health of our environment and on our families.

Overall, I believe Congress is rushing to make this decision regarding Yucca Mountain a decision that our future generations may have to live with for thousands of years. It is inevitable that storing nuclear waste at Yucca

Mountain will continue to be a contentious issue over the next several years as technical details are sorted out. It is my hope that an expanded national debate on this issue will eventually lead to a final decision based on the merits of sound science, rather than on political arguments or larger-scale energy policy issues.

AMERICA'S EDUCATIONAL
STRENGTHS

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 9, 2002

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, in the Outlook section of the Washington Post for Sunday, May 4, Gerald Bracey, has an interesting article which makes a point that I have long thought an important one—namely, that while it has become fashionable to denigrate the quality of public education in America across the board, our country has consistently led the world economically in part because we have done so well in precisely those areas of the economy where an educated workforce is the greatest asset. And as Mr. Bracey points out, those who have argued that our entire public educational system is failing have consistently argued that is would undermined our economic performance, undeterred by the fact that our economic performance has been so good.

As Bracey's article points out, "in the early 1990s, as the economy tanked and a recession set in, many variations of a 'lousy-schools-are-producing-a-lousy-workforce-and-it's-killing-us-in-the-global-marketplace' could be heard. But these slackers somehow managed to turn things around. The American economy: 'back on top was the way the New York summed up the turnaround in February 1994 well, if the schools took the rap when they went south, surely they would be praised when the economy boomed, right? hardly.'"

As Mr. Bracey notes, we do have problems with our school systems, particularly the inequality in which many of our schools in the urban and in some rural areas fall far below standard. Clearly we have to do a better job of helping the educational system overcome the social problems that contribute to the educational difficulties that many students face, and it is our obligation as a society committed to fairness to do far more here, both in and out of school. But the general point remains—if our school system overall was doing such a poor job, it is hard to understand how our economy could be doing so well in the areas where education is key. Because this question is so central to our deliberations, I ask that Mr. Bracey's article be printed here.

WHY DO WE SCAPEGOAT THE SCHOOLS?

(By Gerald W. Bracey)

There's no pleasing some people, even when they get what they want. So why do we keep listening to them?

For almost 20 years now, some of our most prominent business leaders and politicians have sounded the same alarm about the nation's public schools. It began in earnest with that 1983 golden treasury of selected, spun and distorted education statistics, "A Nation At Risk," whose authors wrote, "If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we retain in world markets, we